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I am Dr. Joel Dunnington, Associate Professor of Radiology at M.D. Anderson Cancer. I have been doing tobacco control part time for almost 30 years and as my full time research for 18 years.

Cigarettes are the most dangerous consumer products in the world. Cigarettes kill 25,000 Texans, 438,000 Americans and 5,000,000 people around the world every year. Sir Richard Peto estimates that 100,000,000 people died from tobacco in the Twentieth Century and he estimates that if the current rates continue, 1 billion people will die in the Twenty-first century. One third of my patients at MD Anderson die simply because they smoked cigarettes. Secondhand smoke, or tobacco smoke pollution, causes around 50,000 deaths in the United States every year.

Contrary to what the tobacco industry and their front groups, like the Restaurant Associations, will tell you, every reputable scientific organization in the world that has looked at tobacco smoke pollution has concluded it kills people. Tobacco smoke pollution causes and exacerbates asthma, causes cancer and causes heart attacks.

Any scientist, who does not believe this, probably works for the tobacco industry.

As a friend of mine puts it, cigarettes are mini toxic waste dumps, producing at least 4,500 chemicals. Many cause cancer and others are just extremely toxic. The tobacco industry has known its products cause cancer since at least 1951. Houstonians smoke 8 million mini toxic waste dumps a day.

Smokefree workplaces are purely a health issue. Just like asbestos in schools, lead in paint and gasoline and salmonella in your food, it is an issue of health of both patrons and workers. There is no right to smoke. The tobacco industry's own documents acknowledge that there is no right to smoke. Americans do have a right to breathe clean air, indoors and outdoors.

The sky will not fall. Chicken Little is wrong. The only industry that will lose money is the tobacco industry. They know that when smokefree ordinances pass, smokers quit at a higher rate and many smoke fewer cigarettes. They make less money! Every legitimate economic survey done with valid research methods show there is no economic change in the community, or there is an improvement after workplaces go smoke free.

There is an economic survey circulated last year written by some economists from the University of North Texas about Dallas. This is being sent all over the country by the tobacco industry and the restaurant associations. This is just the last in a long line of pseudo- scientific economic surveys produced by the tobacco industry over the last 20 years. These industry surveys are usually written by people who still believe the earth is flat, if paid enough money. These are lies. The tobacco industry has lied and conspired so much over the last 50 years that it

was convicted on August 17, 2006 in largest racketeering and fraud trial in the history of the country.

Numerous cities, 16 states, 11 Canadian Provinces and 12 countries have passed smoke free workplace laws. Several other states are on the brink of passing smokefree laws.

There were no riots outside movie theaters when they went smokefree. There were no riots in airplanes after they went smokefree. Ninety percent of smokers have tried to quit smoking and 70% of smokers want to quit smoking. Smokefree laws give them an incentive to quit.

Ventilation systems are expensive. The manufacturers of ventilation systems and the tobacco industry itself say they make no health claims about ventilation systems. They do not remove the complex particulate and gaseous mixtures in tobacco smoke.

For those who say we shouldn't bother private businessmen by telling them what to do --- - what are public health laws for? The city and state tell private businessmen to have fire exits and to keep them unchained. They must have sprinkler systems and working fire alarms. Restaurants must keep the food cold or hot. There can't be roaches or mice around the food. There can't be slime in the ice machine. You can't drive drunk. Workplaces must have handicapped access, but citizens with asthma cannot go into areas with tobacco smoke pollution. We even have a city ordinance that prohibits burning leaves outside, but the city says it is ok to do it inside, as long as it is wrapped in a little white piece of paper.

Since many restaurants and bars do not provide health insurance to their employees, when they become ill from the tobacco smoke pollution and have to go to a Houston City Clinic or the Harris County Hospital District, guess who pays? The taxpayers pay.

The Major of Houston was quoted in the Houston Chronicle in 2004 saying, "These polluters don't own the air. They have no right to endanger the lives of citizens downwind. We need tougher regulations and need them enforced."

He said this about outside air, and I agree with him. But Houstonians spend 90% of their time indoors. If smoking is allowed in the workplace, the air quality is almost always far worse than outdoor air. So this statement should apply to indoor and outdoor air.

Eighty percent of the Citizens of El Paso and 90% of Californians like their smokefree laws. Politicians usually call 55 % of the people voting for something a landslide. How many issues do politicians have where 80-90 % of their voters approve of an issue?

Now is the time to ask, who are we protecting with this weak ordinance? The citizens would be healthier. The restaurants and bars will not lose money. Workplaces will be safer. Only two industries will lose money, the tobacco industry and the health care industry when people do not get sick from the smoke.

It is now time for Houston to become a first class city and join other cities, states and countries in protecting its citizens with a complete ban on smoking in all workplaces.